

***A HISTORY of the
BERNE, INDIANA***

FIRST MISSIONARY CHURCH

A HISTORY

of

The First Missionary Church

Berne, Indiana

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Its Origin • Its People • Its Leaders
Its Auxiliary Organizations
Its Growth • Its New
Church Home

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By
Caroline I. Hirschy

1960

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

*to the memory of faithful laymen and ministers who
by their tireless efforts have, under God, prepared
the way for succeeding generations . . . on the day
of dedication of the new house of worship, October
2, 1960.*

A HISTORY

In the last decade of the nineteenth century some of the people of Berne and surrounding area experienced a great spiritual awakening. This was the result of the definite and clear message of salvation and sanctification preached by the Rev. A. E. Funk and Dr. A. B. Simpson. Rev. Funk was a member of a German Mennonite church in Pennsylvania. He and Dr. Simpson held revivals as they traveled among the German people in the Middle West.

In the middle nineties Rev. J. A. Sprunger of Berne, and a member of the General Conference Mennonites was led into a new Christian experience. While on a trip to Switzerland he was ordained to the ministry. Later he ministered under the institutional name Light and Hope. He founded deaconess homes and hospitals in Chicago and Cleveland. He founded an orphanage at Berne; here he also conducted a Bible Training School and established a publishing house for the printing of religious literature; he edited and published the monthly magazine "Licht und Hoffnung" which later was printed in English with the name "Light and Hope."

A young minister, Rev. J. E. Ramseyer, of the Defenseless Mennonite Church in Michigan became acquainted with Rev. Funk and Dr. Simpson. Rev. Ramseyer conducted revivals in Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, and Kansas. He preached the sterner truths of the Gospel including sin and judgment; he emphasized the deeper life or sanctification, divine healing, and the second coming of Christ. He began to preach in English so he could reach more people with the Gospel. These genuine revivals spread their effects over entire communities transforming them by the power of God. The results produced many ministers and missionaries. In the summer of 1896 he held a camp meeting in Berne, also one in the oil field area southwest of Berne.

These ministers believed that there should be a uniting of the German speaking people to expedite cooperation and concerted effort in the propagation of the Gospel both at home and in foreign lands. In the years of many revivals, missionary passion was quickened. Although no united work resulted at this time, the inspiration of the meetings was projected far into the future.

Rev. Sprunger started a Sunday School, worship services, and prayer meetings at the orphanage for the children and the workers in the home. The Sunday services were held in the afternoon. Some cottage prayer meetings were held in the summer and fall. Rev. Sprunger was pastor, Adam Welty, the school teacher, was superintendent of the Sunday School, and song leader. Mrs. Sprunger, the deaconesses, and other workers in the home were Sunday School teachers.

Several German families of the Defenseless Mennonite Church, and a few other people living in Berne and in the nearby rural areas started

to attend church at the orphanage in 1893. Others came in the next few years. They liked Rev. Sprunger's preaching; they were interested in the children and workers. They often brought food from the farms to them. On other occasions they invited them to their homes.

These families became very much interested in missions, their interest was increased and strengthened by the monthly Mission Band Services. Carrie Peters and Anna Sudermann had organized the Band to give more emphasis to missions. Later the two deaconesses were missionaries in India.

Our Mission Band is the outgrowth of these early missionary meetings. It has met regularly through more than half a century, with the missionary emphasis being its objective. The present Mission Band has ten to twelve meetings a year on the Sunday when a home or foreign missionary can be present to give the message. The Mission Band includes everyone in the Church who is interested.

About the year 1895 a need arose for the help of women to sew garments and make bedding for the people in the orphanage. Mrs. Sprunger received help from the women attending the church. They worked together in making many garments and some bedding for the children in the home. They met as a body on the first Thursday afternoon of each month. Much of the machine work was done in homes of the women of the congregation. The Women's Missionary Society is an outgrowth of the work started by Mrs. Sprunger. There are now four departments. Each group meets monthly and has its own missionary project.

The Ladies' Aid, the oldest group, has a membership of about 35. They make bedding and garments for children, especially infants; they furnish funds for some equipment for our foreign missionaries. For many years they sent bedding and clothing to Sarah Roth in Chicago, to give to destitute people in that city.

The Dorcas Missionary Circle organized in 1955 with Mrs. Eli Sprunger as president. The membership is about 40. This group of young mothers usually meets in the evening. Their work supplements that of the older group. One of their special projects is remembering the missionaries and their families with birthday and Christmas greetings. They also give showers to missionaries on furlough on special occasions.

The Girls' Auxiliary organized in 1926. Salome Schug was president. This group of working girls has about 15 members. They also have supplied outgoing missionaries with necessary equipment. For a number of years they have given the Detroit Missionary Workers many articles and funds needed in a city mission.

The Girls Sewing Circle, a group of girls 10 to 18 years, works under a sponsor; Martha Hirschy is the present sponsor. Betty Schindler started the work at her home about 20 years ago. The girls make scrap books, stuffed toys, baby comforters and quilts, aprons and bibs for the Bethany Children's Home, Inc. at Bethany, Kentucky. They make folders out of Sunday School and greeting cards which the missionaries give as awards to the native children.

In 1896 about fourteen families attended the services at the Orphans Home. The larger congregation felt a need for a larger place of worship. This same year the Reformed people were building a new church

on Main Street and offered their old building on Jefferson and Water Streets for sale. This was Berne's first schoolhouse built in 1877 by the trustee of Monroe Township. Berne built its own school house in 1888. The Reformed people bought the old schoolhouse, remodeled it and used it for a church until 1896. Rev. J. A. Sprunger and his congregation bought the building for \$700.00. The deed was made on December 12, 1896 to the trustees of The United Missionary Church. The trustees were J. J. Amstutz, J. J. Hirschy and John Lehman.

The church was a small white frame building with a tall steeple. It was heated by a large wood stove in the middle of the room. It was lighted by natural gas. The pews in the balcony of the brick church came from the little white church.

The pews were arranged in two sections with a wide aisle between them. The low pulpit at the west end was flanked on both side with three pews. Naturally speaking, it was an uncomfortable building with meager facilities. The congregation, however, was happy to have their own place of worship. There are many memories of good revivals, great missionary zeal and blessed fellowship while worshipping in the little white church.

In 1896 Rev. J. A. Sprunger was pastor, Adam Welty, the school-teacher, was Sunday School superintendent. Mrs. Sprunger, the workers and other members were Sunday School teachers.

Early in 1897 the church became adjusted in its new place of worship. Rev. Sprunger continued as pastor, David S. Sprunger was the first Sunday School superintendent; Sarah Stucky, Katie Lehman, Mrs. J. A. Sprunger and J. J. Amstutz were some of the teachers, Lillie Hirschy was organist, J. U. Amstutz was song leader.

Rev. William Egle who was associated with Rev. Sprunger in the Light and Hope Society, became the first regular pastor of the church in 1898.

For several years there were struggles in the older fellowship of the Defenseless Mennonite Church. The issues over which the battle raged were some of the great truths and doctrines of the Bible; the revivals of these years centered around these truths. Many in the church believed that baptism by immersion was the Bible way of baptism. For several years Rev. J. E. Ramseyer had strong convictions concerning this doctrine. In 1896 he was baptized by immersion while attending a convention at Beulah Park, Cleveland, Ohio. In the summer of 1897 many of the church were baptized by immersion. These people believed they should unite to worship together, and hoped to have a church home eventually.

The next year 1898 a call went out to many ministers and laymen to convene near Berne, Indiana, for the last three days of August. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the organization of a new church. A suggestion was made that they unite with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, which at that time was undenominational. After much prayer and consultation the group under God's guidance decided to effect a new church organization. Rev. J. E. Ramseyer, Rev. J. A. Sprunger, and Rev. Wm. Egle had a vital part in this decision.

The Missionary Church Association was founded August 29, 1898. The choosing of a name for the new organization was a consideration of great importance. The word 'Church', according to the Greek, means

called out ones; the word 'Association' speaks of a oneness and fellowship. 'Missionary' speaks of the spirit of witnessing, of going, and telling. Missionary work seemed to be the reason for which they wanted to be organized. The first officers were Rev. A. E. Funk, president, Rev. J. E. Ramseyer, vice-president, Rev. Wm. Egle, secretary, David Schindler of the Berne community, treasurer.

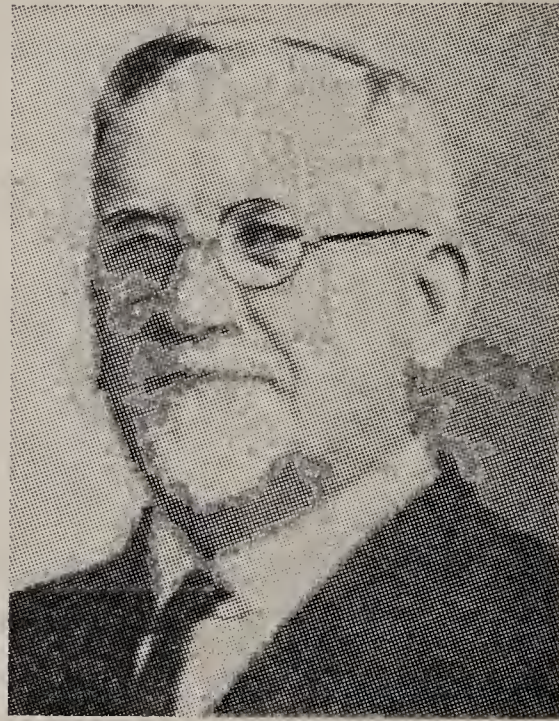
The Berne Church, became a member of the Association later in 1898 and was named Berne Missionary Church.

Rev. Egle's ministry in the Berne church was richly blessed of God. In the second year of his pastorate a great revival continuing through six weeks resulted in more than one hundred decisions for Christ. The church grew in numbers and spiritual life.

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THE LITTLE WHITE CHURCH



REV. WILLIAM EGLE

Interest in missions increased. Giving for the cause of missions was a vital part for all ages in the church. The children's interest was promoted by the little wooden cylindrical banks with screw tops. The first record of a children's offering is dated Thanksgiving 1901. This offering was sent to the Armenian orphans. The Berne Church preceded other churches in the Association in children's missionary offerings.

Rev. Solomon Klopfenstein who was assistant pastor in 1901 and 1902, became regular pastor of the church in 1903 and served until 1904. In 1901 the church started keeping written records of its activities. The records were in German until 1907. The German language was used in the Sunday morning service many years and was still required in part of the service in 1919. The first hymn book was "Gemeinde Gesangbuch." The Sunday School used the song book "Honey Out of the Rock."

When Mrs. J. E. Ramseyer, wife of the Association president, attended her first convention at Pandora, Ohio, in 1902, she determined that children should receive some inspiration and impressions of a missionary convention. She believed that the spirit of missions must be planted in their hearts; as they grow up they must be prepared to go,

to give, and to pray. Through her great effort the first children's meeting was planned. From this first meeting of the children has grown the Sunshine Makers movement of the Missionary Church Association. In the 1903 convention little banks in the shape of small jugs were distributed to fifty children. The shape of the missionary jug has changed several times. Now it is in the form of an acorn. The first breaking of the Missionary jugs was at the 1904 convention at Swanton, Ohio. In 1905 at Pandora, Ohio the name "Sunshine Makers" was chosen. Requests for jugs came from many churches. The children of the Berne Church received jugs about at this time. For a few years the jug breaking service was at the annual convention. Soon the jug breaking service was held in the individual churches. A large number of children take part in this important service. In 1918 Elton Roth wrote the words and music of the Sunshine Makers' Song. He dedicated it to Mrs. Ramseyer.

The Sunshine Makers money has gone into practically all mission fields of the Association. The funds have supplied the full support of two missionaries, Miss Affie Smoots in Africa, and Miss Mary DeGarmo in China. Now the funds are applied to the support of the children of the missionaries.

Rev. A. M. Clauser was pastor of the church in 1904 and 1905. He was the first pastor to receive a specified salary. It was \$20.00 a month.

Rev. E. F. Clauser, brother of the former pastor, served the church one year 1905 to 1906. The young people of the church felt they should have an organization through which they could enjoy Christian fellowship and develop their spiritual lives. Rev. Clauser was interested in their ideas and plans and gave them much encouragement and guidance.

In January 1905 the pastor cooperated with the pastors of the other Berne churches in the first Union Meetings. Rev. S. D. Gordon Cleveland, Ohio was the main speaker in the afternoon and evening services. The German speaker Rev. Wm. Leich held services in the morning. Mr. Gabriel was song leader.

The Union meetings have been conducted annually since 1905, with all churches cooperating.

In the December-January 1907-1908 meeting Rev. M. S. Rees was the speaker. A revival began which continued two weeks. The local pastors preached in the second week. The spiritual awakening was community wide; it was compared with the revivals of 1886 and 1894.

The Berne Ministerial Association made plans for revival meetings in January of 1950. The evangelist, Rev. Harold Walker, song leader, George Pike, children's worker, Louise Kimmel and Prof. Ira Gerig, pianist, held meetings in the large Mennonite Church January 1 to 15. Rev. Walker was at his best, he preached convincing sermons, and God's blessing was on the meetings. The large church was filled to capacity. Young people responded to the call of God. In the two weeks 308 decisions for Christ were made.

Through the years many eminent teachers have preached the great truths of the Bible, including salvation, consecration, Christian service and prophecy.

In the years 1906 to 1911 Rev. H. H. Amstutz was pastor of the church. In 1908 the Young People organized under the name Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavor. They had regular one-half hour services each Sunday evening. Their objective was to promote an earnest Christian life among the members and make them more useful in the service of the Lord. The first president was Caroline I. Hirschy. The organization continued under this name until about 1914 when it was called The Young Peoples Society.

The church became fully organized in 1908 with fifty-eight charter members. The constitution was conformed to the constitution of the Association.

In February 1908 at a special business meeting the church decided to erect a new building to provide for a growing Sunday School and congregation. More Sunday School classes had been organized. The first class for young married people was among these. The money for the new church was raised by subscription among the members and among neighboring churches and individuals. Many townspeople contributed liberally to the fund. Within a few weeks a sum of \$3045.00 had been raised and the church decided to build. The contract was made with the Artificial Stone Company for \$3998.00. The old building was sold to the highest bidder for \$200.00. It was moved off the church ground, across Jefferson St., then across Water St. into the next block. The building now houses the Laundromat.

Construction of the new building progressed rapidly. The corner stone laying service was held on July 5, 1908. In the morning service Rev. H. P. Welton, Detroit, Michigan, spoke on the text "What Mean These Stones."

PROGRAM FOR THE 3:00 P.M. SERVICE

Opening Address—The Pastor

Song

Prayer—Rev. A. M. Clauser

Sermon—Rev. H. P. Weldon, Detroit, Michigan

Offering

Laying of the Corner Stone—Rev. D. Y. Schultz, Fort Wayne

Benediction

CONTENTS OF CORNER STONE LAID IN 1908

1. Bible — First English Bible owned by Rev. H. H. Amstutz, then pastor of the church; he purchased it in 1905.
2. Song book, "Honey Out Of The Rock", first book used in the Sunday School in 1897.
3. A brief history of the church by Rev. H. H. Amstutz together with a list of charter members of the church.
4. A record book of the Mission Band for the years 1905 to 1908 inclusive.
5. A Sunday School quarterly for the 2nd quarter, 1908.

6. Two copies of the Missionary Worker of July 15, 1908 edited by D. Y. Schultz and containing a report of the corner stone laying on July 5, 1908.
7. One copy of Botschafter des Heils of July 15, 1908, German organ of the Missionary Church Association and edited by Rev. Wm. Egle giving an account of the Eckstein Legung, July 5, 1908.
8. Two C. E. Topic cards for October to December 1907 with pictures of the first church on opposite side.
9. A copy of the Berne Witness of July 3, 1908 giving the program for the corner stone laying, July 5, 1908.
10. A copy of the 1908-1909 catalogue of The Fort Wayne Bible Training School, built just three years.
11. A copy of the Tenth Anniversary Souvenir Edition of The Berne Witness published in 1906; it gives a brief history of each church in the town.
12. A copy of The Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, July 4, 1908.
13. A copy of the Cincinnati Post, June 25, 1908, with an account of Ex-President Grover Cleveland's death.

The trustees of the church were J. J. Amstutz, David Hirschy, and J. J. Hirschy.

The new church built at the cost of \$5500.00 was a brick structure with basement and two balconies; it had a seating capacity of about 500. The modest steeple housed the bell from the old white church. This bell has called the people to worship for more than sixty years.



CHURCH BUILT IN 1908



REV. HIRAM H. AMSTUTZ

Dedication of the new church was on October 25, 1908. Rev. A. E. Witmer preached the dedicatory sermon. The Association President, Rev. J. E. Ramseyer, was unable to attend the service. Rev. C. W. Oyer, Pandora, Ohio gave the dedicatory prayer.

Other events in Rev. Amstutz's pastorate were the beginning of the

Cradle Roll in 1909; Esther Sprunger was superintendent. The first delegates were sent to the annual conference in 1910; the first deacons were elected in 1911. The church started paying rent for the house which the pastor and his family occupied. New song books, "Revival Hymns," were bought for the Sunday School. Both suntime and standard time were used in the town, and the adoption of either one was optional. The church decided to adopt standard time.

The Fort Wayne Bible School had opened in 1904. The young people of the church began to attend and prepare for Christian service. Agnes Sprunger attended the school; she received a call from the Lord to go to Africa. She asked the Christian and Missionary Alliance to accept her; they did so. She had no funds, so her going to the field was delayed. She is the first member of the church to volunteer to go to the foreign field. Norman Hirschy had finished his Bible School work and in 1912 entered Christian work with D. C. Stucky, Detroit, Mich.

Rev. G. R. Schroeder was called in 1912 to the pastorate of the church. He stayed two years. The church decided to purchase a house for a parsonage to provide better housing for the pastor and his family. In 1913 the Menno Burkhalter house on West Water Street was bought at the price of \$1500. The parsonage was one and one-half blocks west from the church.

The church adopted a plan for raising funds to support our outgoing missionary, Agnes Sprunger. The Mission Band, the Sunday School and the Christian Endeavor joined in giving their offerings to this fund. In 1914 the church sent \$300.00 to the Association treasurer; this was to be used as part of her support.

The church decided to hold the annual business meeting on the first Monday of the new year.

The pastor's salary was advanced to \$30.00 a month.

Rev. S. J. Grabill became pastor in 1914. His pastorate was blessed with missionary zeal. Three missionaries went to the foreign field. Agnes Sprunger went to Africa in 1916, Mary De Garmo to China in 1919, and Tilman Amstutz to India in 1919. The church also helped to support Chris Eicher, missionary in India. Jesse Amstutz, after completing his studies at the Bible School, served as assistant pastor to Rev. Wm. Egle at Wauneta, Nebraska. Menno Amstutz entered Christian work as pastor about this time.

Other changes and progress were made. The church bought a seal and printed stationery to be used in business transactions. In 1918 the constitution of the Association was adopted; however, the church retained the right to elect its officers. A small church library was started in 1917.

Through Mrs. J. E. Ramseyer's interest and enthusiasm the Gleaner's movement was started in 1915 in the Berne and Pandora, Ohio churches. The movement spread to other churches. The purpose of the Gleaners was to have the boys and girls in their teens to continue their missionary interest and activities. The money gathered in their five-dollar banks made a sizeable contribution to the missionary enterprise. This money was used to support the children of the missionaries.

The annual convention convened in Berne in the summer of 1919. The local church made provisions for serving meals on the ground, and find lodging in the homes of the congregation for the people in attendance.

In the autumn of 1919 Rev. W. J. Amstutz became pastor of the church and served two years. The trustees advanced the pastor's salary to \$75.00 a month.

Rev. Wm. Egle returned to the church in 1921. In the fall of 1923 the church had a good revival; the evangelists were Rev. N. W. Rich and W. R. Hallman. In 1924 the church again was host to the Annual Convention.

In 1925 the church considered remodeling the parsonage. Later building on the church lot was proposed. This plan, however, was rejected. An appointed committee decided to sell the parsonage on Water Street and buy a larger and better house. The parsonage was sold for \$2550.00 and a larger one, a brick structure, the former David Luginbill house on Sprunger and Cleveland Street was bought for \$5500.00.

While associated with Rev. J. A. Sprunger in the Light and Hope Publishing House, Rev. Egly began the publishing of the German periodical "Der Botschafter des Heils in Christo." The paper gave emphasis to the full truths of the Gospel. In 1903 the General Conference recognized and approved it as the official organ of the Association. While serving as pastor, Rev. Egle was still editing the paper until 1927; the growing lack of appeal of the German language made it unprofitable. The Missionary Worker was first published in 1904. It reached a larger constituency than the German paper, and had a special appeal to the young people. The "Worker" is the official journal of the Missionary Church Association.

Two members of the church went to the foreign mission fields. Fanny Schindler went to Africa in 1924, Elda Amstutz to India in 1927. Sylvia and Leona Amstutz were doing home missionary work in Council Bluffs, Iowa for a number of years.

Tillman Habegger completed his Bible School training in 1929. The same year he became pastor of the Bucklin, Kansas, Missionary Church. He was pastor of a number of churches and spent several years in furthering his education. In 1956 the Association appointed him to the office of Home Secretary. The capable administration of his office led to a greater expansion and strengthening of churches in the Association. The foreign missionary work is dependent on the strong support of the home churches. In 1958 Rev. Habegger was elected to the office of president of the Missionary Church Association.

Rev. Henry Tropf was pastor of the church five years, 1930 to 1935. In 1932 the church first took part in the Summer Bible School of the Berne Community. The pastor was a teacher; he and Vilas Schindler were on the Bible School Board. Since 1932 Menno Hirschy has been on the board. Every summer the pastor and some members of the church have been teachers in the school. The school has grown in size and influence. The children come from Berne and a big area surrounding it. The purpose of the school is best expressed in Psalm

119-11, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee."

The 1960 school year, the fortieth one, had an enrollment of 763 and 83 graduates. It is believed that this school is the largest Summer Bible School in the United States.

Rev. C. H. Wiederkehr's pastorate was from 1936 to 1948. At the beginning of their ministry Rev. and Mrs. Wiederkehr invited the children of the church to come to a children's meeting about one-half hour before the evening service. The children were thrilled and responded heartily. The group increased in numbers approaching one hundred. Mrs. Wiederkehr conducted the meeting, which Rev. Wiederkehr named "Children's Happy Hour." The children learned to listen carefully, they learned to pray and to give. Their pennies soon amounted to a good sum. It was through Mrs. Wiederkehr's vision, effort, and influence that the Sunshine Makers' offering in the entire Association is given for the support of the children of the foreign missionaries of the Association.

Each succeeding pastor's wife has been leader of the Children's Happy Hour. Mrs. J. J. Klopfenstein, "Aunt Mary," the present leader is doing much to make the meetings attractive to the children. She and her assistants plan the programs. The best feature is the story of a great Bible character related by Aunt Mary. Often this is a continued



Church with North Wing

story, requiring more than one meeting. There are testimonies, requests for prayer and prayers by the children. There is much singing and always a special number. An offering is received at every meeting. This money is put in the Sunshine Makers treasury.

In 1937 the church's name was changed to "The First Missionary Church."

In 1942 the church building was enlarged by an addition of 20 feet to the auditorium along the north side. This provided for a larger platform for the pulpit, a place for the choir and increased seating space. The basement of the addition had a room 20 by 48 feet. A 12 by 20 feet extended addition on the northwest corner provided a west entrance, basement and balcony stairways, clothes racks and library space. The second floor room was a class room; the basement room was used by the beginner's department.

The increased seating capacity in balcony and auditorium was about 100; in three class rooms it was about 75.

The approximate building cost was \$11,000.00.

In 1943 Rev. Wiederkehr began to issue the church bulletin from his office. It appeared in typed form with the picture of the church on the front page.

The weekly chapel exercises in the Berne-French High School were planned as a part of the school program. The local ministers spoke at these exercises. Later the rural high schools also provided for weekly chapel exercises. The Berne and rural pastors spoke at their chapel exercises.

In Rev. Wiederkehr's pastorate a number of families of the Amish Christian Church were looking for a new church home. Some of them started attending services at the First Missionary Church. They received spiritual guidance and a friendly welcome from the church people. Rev. Wiederkehr gave them the desired counsel and guidance. About eight families attended the church services. Many of these decided to become members of the church. Among the family names were these: Inniger, Steury, Schwartz, Habegger, and Nussbaum.

In the early years of the Church the pastors conducted their own revivals. When the membership increased the people were better able to have an evangelist come to the church for revival meetings.

The church has had many good revivals. One or more revivals were now held annually. More emphasis was being placed on youth revivals. Many outstanding Bible teachers and evangelists have come to the church.

The evangelists in revival meetings in Rev. Wiederkehr's pastorate were: 1936 Rev. Dale Mitchell; 1937 Rev. Joshua Stauffer; 1938 Rev. Harold Wiswell; 1939 Rev. Edison Habegger; 1940 Rev. Q. J. Everest and Rev. Menno N. Amstutz; 1941 Dr. C. I. Armstrong; 1942 Rev. Kenneth Geiger and Rev. Edison Habegger; 1943 Rev. Anna Spellman, and Rev. Q. J. Everest; 1944 Rev. T. C. Henderson; 1945 Rev. George Hewitt; 1946 Dr. Jared F. Gerig; 1947 Rev. Forest Kuhn; 1948 Rev. Robert Strubhar.

Missionaries going to the foreign field were 1939 Luella Burley, India; 1940 Waldo and Cecil Schindler, Africa.

The Youth organizations date back to 1908 when the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was organized. In 1915 the teen age group, the Gleaners, organization was started. The older group shortened its name to Young People's Society at this time, and continued with this name until 1945. In the late twenties and early thirties a more aggressive young people's program began to develop. There was a need for a broader program to embrace the total development of youth under active and well-organized leadership. In 1945, the name, Missionary Youth Fellowship, was adopted as the official name of the young people's organization throughout the Association. A new and broader platform of objectives was incorporated in new by-laws approved by the same conference. These include the promotion and development of the spirituality of the young people, edification through Scriptural knowledge, enlistment in evangelistic and missionary effort at

home and abroad through existing Association organizations and the promotion of church loyalty and fellowship among the M.C.A. young people.

All M.C.A. districts are completely organized and carry on their programs under the supervision of the Superintendent of Young People's work in the Association.

Rallies, youth camps, youth revivals and the promotion of various types of projects have combined to enlarge and strengthen the program.

The local M.Y.F. organization is carrying this program under capable leadership.

The youth leaders in the church since 1945 are Kathleen Inniger, Mildred Hirschy, Gareth Wiederkehr, Merlin Inniger, Valier Amstutz, Christene Sprunger, George Hewitt, John Zuercher and LeRoy Sprunger. Five of these leaders are in active Christian work, four of them in foreign missionary work.

The local M.Y.F. has for its special missionary project the support of Kathleen Inniger Jacobsen, missionary in Japan. The Gleaner's organization was discontinued in 1957; their missionary offerings were all directed into the one fund for Kathleen Jacobsen. The group has an annual rally when they bring their offering.

The M.Y.F. leader in the local church is LeRoy Sprunger. He has served in this office since 1954. As a district Y.F.C. leader he has given the young people of the church and community capable and effective Christian leadership.

Rev. J. Pritchard Amstutz was pastor from 1948 to 1952. He initiated a new idea in church publications. "Missionary Echos" official weekly news bulletin of The First Missionary Church was mailed to all members and friends of the church for ten months in 1951. About 225 copies were printed.

The regular church bulletin was printed by the Economy Printing Concern through the courtesy of C. H. Muselman, and daughter Pauline.

The missionaries who went to the foreign field were: 1949 Truman and Eileen Gottschalk, Ecuador, South America, and in 1950 Pauline Muselman; 1950 Kathleen Jacobsen went to Japan.

The Men's Fellowship was organized in 1949. Don Grove was elected president by the small group of 13 men. The men have monthly meetings with an attendance of 30 to 40. They have guest groups occasionally, and also go to other churches as guests. They usually have a special speaker. Some of the men in this group called "Pals" are contributing to a special fund which is used to pay young pastors in new churches which are unable to support them. This money goes to the Association treasury which sends the money where most needed.

The local men also remember needy families in the Christmas season with baskets of food.

Evangelists who held revivals in the church were: 1948, Rev. Blanchard Amstutz; 1949, Dr. John H. Paul, and Rev. Harold Walker in Youth Revival; 1950, Rev. A. F. Albro. and Rev. "Jimmie" Gibson; 1951, Rev. Garret H. Phillips and Gerald Gerig in youth revival; 1952, Rev. Charles McHatten and Rev. Claude Richards in youth revival.

The present pastor, Rev. J. J. Klopfenstein, came in 1952. His pas-

torate so far has been occupied with many extras duties and activities. The building of the new church required much of his time. He appreciates the progress of the church in temporal affairs, but admonishes the people of the church to attend to the most important work, that of spiritual growth and progress; this should concern every member.

In 1953 the by-laws of the church were amended. In 1956 they were made to conform with the Association constitution which was amended by the Conference. In 1957 the new Association by-law were accepted with regard to the voting age of members, selection of pastor, and membership of the church. The local by-laws were further amended to read: "Our local church fiscal year shall end on September 30 and open on October 1.

The Reusser Memorial Home in Berne became a home for missionary families on furlough. It has two well furnished apartments, basement and attic. It is situated on a large ground of four lots along Sprunger and Clark Streets. The Waldo Schindler, Dan Dyck, and O. Carl Brown families have lived in the apartments recently. At present the Dave Clark and Jake Scherling families are living there. These families worship at the local Missionary Church.

Retired missionaries worshiping at the local church are Rev. and Mrs. D. C. Rupp, Fanny Schindler and Agnes Sprunger. The latter two are also members of the church. Rev. and Mrs. Rupp have established their residence in their own home.

Young people who entered Christian work are: 1952 Robert and Lorene Schrock, pastor, Pleasant Mills Baptist Church. 1952 Brice Fennig, pastor of Brethren Church, Howe, Ind.; 1953 Gareth and Treva Wiederkehr, missionaries, Sierra Leone, West Africa; 1954 Paul Amstutz, pastor of two Methodist churches, New Haven, Michigan; 1954 Roger Amstutz, pastor of Christian Church, Murray, Ind.; 1954 Merlin Inniger, missionary in Pakistan; 1956 Walter and Esther Bailey, pastor, Wauneta, Nebraska Missionary Church; 1957 John and Bernadine Zuercher, pastor Union Chapel, Bryant, Ind., and 1960 missionaries in Haiti; 1957 Martel and Anna Fennig, missionaries, Kenya Colony, East Africa; 1958 Tom Zehr, assistant pastor First Missionary Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.; 1958 Edward Amstutz, director Christian Education, Baptist Church, Orlando, Florida; 1959 Ernest Steury, missionary doctor, Kenya Colony, East Africa; 1960 Millard and Janean Moser, missionaries, Hong Kong.

The evangelists of this period were: 1953 Rev. Arthur Albro and Rev. George Hewitt; 1954 Rev. Edison Habegger; 1955 Rev. Robert Strubhar and Rev. Don Rohr, youth revival; 1956 Rev. Jared F. Gerig and Rev. C. W. Slemming; 1957 Rev. John Nussbaum and Rev. Paul E. Grabill in youth revival; 1958 Rev. W. O. Klopfenstein and Rev. Vernon Petersen in youth revival; 1959 Rev. Carl Bihl.

The Sunday School, the first organization of the church in the United States is also the most important one. It includes all ages and meets every Sunday. More people hear the Word of God in Sunday School than in any other organization of the church. The Sunday School of the First Missionary Church has an enrollment of approximately 400. The two beginner and three junior classes have a combined enrollment of more than 100; the adult department has nearly 300. There are 16 teachers

and 21 assistants. The superintendent, Ornell Sprunger with his executive committee has executed the work of his office with wisdom and patience. The adjustment necessary in moving to new locations were not noticeable in the first Sunday School in the new church.

Being true to her name and obligation the church has maintained its missionary program and giving regardless of the financial obligation connected with the building program. The average missionary offering for the last eight years is \$15,997.97.

The church now has a membership of 310. From the time of its organization in 1908 to the present time 1960, over 600 names have appeared on the membership list.

In the year 1936 a fund of \$1,049.37 was received from the church members for repairing and decorating the church. After this work was completed \$216.00 of the fund remained in the treasury. This fund was named building fund. To increase the fund ten per cent of the money in the treasuries of the church organizations except the money in the treasuries of foreign missions and of the trustees was added to it. In 1942 the church decided that all funds received in 1941 and those that will be received in 1942 which are in excess of the Missionary pledges be allotted to the building fund; this allotment was made after \$200.00 above the total Missionary pledges of the combined organizations was allowed for Missions. Menno Hirschy served as treasurer of the building fund.

In 1946 a Building Fund Committee was appointed. Clyde Sprunger was named chairman. The ten per cent payment to the fund was discontinued in 1945. The treasuries of the Sunday School and of the Trustees were asked to make pledges to the fund. In 1947 the Home Missions, the Trustees, the Mission Band, the Ladies' Aid, the Youth Fellowship, and the Sunday School paid their share into the building fund.

In the years 1948 and 1949 special offerings for the building fund were received on a designated Sunday in each quarter of the year. The trustees and three other men appointed by the church formed a board which was to investigate and present a plan to promote the building program.

In 1950 and 1951 the Building Fund chairman reported that the plan for giving to the fund was satisfactory. In 1953, the Sunday School superintendent, the trustees, Reuben Steury, Preston Zehr, and Clyde Sprunger, served on the Building Fund Committee. A year later in 1954 the committee was renamed the Planning and Survey Committee. The committee members were Clyde Sprunger, chairman, Cyrus Lehman, treasurer, Lorris Phillips, Leslie Sprunger, trustee, Ornell Sprunger, S. S. Superintendent, Preston Zehr, church council, Reuben Steury, J. J. Klopfenstein, pastor. This committee studied the possibilities of enlarging the church building; this implied buying an adjoining lot, namely the Hocker lot. The committee counselled with architect Leroy Bradley of Fort Wayne. He informed them that building an addition to the church building was not advisable. The committee did not recommend buying the Hocker property. The committee then directed their thinking toward the need for a new church building.

At the 1955 annual business meeting the committee presented to the church the need for a larger building with better facilities for the Sun-

day School and other organizations of the church. Considering the church needs of the future, they informed the church people it would be wise to think about a new site for a new church. They suggested a better plan for raising funds in the next three to five years. The church approved by a standing vote the desire of the committee to present recommendations for a new site and a new church.

In the summer of the same year the church voted to buy land on which to build a new church. Three sites were named for consideration. One was north on U. S. Highway 27, one on Road 118 and the third south on U. S. Highway 27 south of the Park Motel. Voting was done by ballot. The site on Road 118 was rejected. The church decided to purchase the site south on U.S. Highway 27. The trustees bought a five acre plot of ground between Stucky and Parkway from the Stucky Estate. Mrs. Metta Stuckey pleased with the possibility of a church being built in that area, sold the ground at a very reasonable price. Geographically the new church site lies on the Continental Divide. The drainage from the church ground flows into the Wabash River.

At the 1956 annual business meeting favorable reports were given on the progress of the building fund. It was increased by the balance of the Anna R. Sprunger estate in the amount of \$3,195.16. The church budget committee was authorized to transfer the 1956 balance in the church treasury to the building fund. This was done again in the church years 1957, 1957-58, 1958-59, 1959-60.

The Planning and Survey Committee membership was increased by including these men: Albert Amstutz, Homer Amstutz, Oswin Amstutz, Virgil Amstutz, Homer Inniger, C. H. Muselman, LaVerne Sprunger.

At the semi-annual business meeting 1956 the church gave the Planning and Survey Committee the authority to engage a licensed architect to draw up several tentative plans for a new church building; the committee was to study the plans and submit them to the church for study, discussion and approval. At a special business meeting August 21, 1957 a plan was presented to the church. A 66 2/3 per cent vote was needed for adoption of the plan. Only 58% voted for the adoption.

The church, nevertheless, decided to continue the building fund offerings. More men were added to the Planning and Survey Committee, namely Harold Langham, Leroy Sprunger, Melvin Sprunger, Frank Steury, John Zehr. In a meeting called on April 9, 1958, the church people were informed how they could finance a building program. Trustee Leslie Sprunger announced a plan for an offering in the Sunday School on the last Sunday of each month. The use of an envelope system in weekly offerings was very successful. Many members made sizeable pledges. Leslie Sprunger informed the church people about the Broadway Plan for Church Finance. The church voted to accept this plan. At the same meeting the church voted to build on the site purchased in 1955.

In a special business meeting held August 20, 1958 Clyde Sprunger presented a new church plan. Orus Esch the architect, was present and answered questions about the plan. Ornell Sprunger explained the part of the plan designed for the Sunday School. Leroy Sprunger pointed out the advantages provided for the young people. The trustees reported that

the building fund was \$97,362.17. The church approved and accepted the plan, and voted to begin construction as soon as possible.

The function of the Planning and Survey Committee was terminated. The members of the committee and the trustees now belonged to the Master Steering Committee. This committee was to guide the work in the building program and appoint other needed committees as the work progressed. Trustee Leslie Sprunger reported that funds were coming in regularly and that he was expecting the year's total to be \$17,000.00.

A new committee, the Master Building Committee was appointed to look after the building process. The members were Leslie Sprunger, chairman, Laverne Sprunger, Carl W. Amstutz, Clyde Sprunger, Loris Phillips.

At the semi-annual business meeting of April 22, 1959, Clyde Sprunger reported that bids received were opened on April 21; contracts were let on April 22 to the following:

General Contractor, Merlin W. Habegger

Electrical and Resistance Heating, Reynolds Electric.

Plumbing, Ventilation and Cooling, Liechty Brothers.

Estimates received by Orus Esch and given to the church were on well and pump, church pews, Sunday School furniture and equipment, kitchen and its equipment. Leslie Sprunger explained a part of the building which was not included in the plan. Everything was in readiness to begin construction. The Ground Breaking Service was announced.

GROUND BREAKING SERVICE April 26, 1959. 10:45 A.M.

First Missionary Church of Berne

At new church site.

Congregational singing—led by Clyde Sprunger

Scripture Reading and Prayer—by the pastor

Special singing—Mens Chorus

Remarks by the pastor

Ground Breaking—by representative people—

—those with temporal responsibilities

1. Leslie Sprunger—Trustee Board

2. Clyde Sprunger—Planning and Building Committees

3. Orus Eash—Architect & Builders

—those with spiritual responsibilities

4. Rev. J. J. Klopfenstein—pastor

5. Menno S. Hirschy—Church Board

6. Ornell Sprunger—Sunday School

7. Leroy Sprunger—Youth Department

8. Mrs. Klopfenstein and the little people—Children's Work

Congregational singing

Benediction—by Rev. Truman Gottschalk.

Member of the Foreign Board, M. C. A.

The entire congregation, with small exception, went from the unified service to the new church site.

The parking lot, and the new building floor plan, were staked and roped, giving quite an accurate idea of the exact location and size of the

undertaking. During the service, the congregation stood where the pews will be, the mens chorus stood where the choir will be and the pastor stood where the pulpit will be.

In the summer of 1959 the trustees of the church applied for a Charter of Incorporation in the State of Indiana. This charter enabled the church to authorize the issuing of \$100,000 in bonds under the Broadway Plan of Church Finance. In a special meeting in December application was made for an additional \$25,000 bond issue. The selling of bonds enabled the church to get funds needed in the building program. The Church Finance Committee: Clifton Amstutz, chairman, Jay Conrad, Menno Hirschy, Vilas Schindler, Jerry Sprunger, Carl H. Muselman administered the business of the bond sales.

At the same summer meeting the church decided to carpet the entire sanctuary and purchase plain pews for sanctuary and balcony.

The building operations proceeded according to plans and schedule. The building fund was increasing. The total pledges and money in bonds was \$172,988.84.

THE CORNER STONE LAYING SERVICE May 1, 1960.

9:45 Service at Church

Congregational song

Invocation

Men's Chorus

Scripture and Prayer—Homer Inniger

Preparation

1. "Trust in God"—Rev. J. J. Klopfenstein, pastor
"Except the Lord built the house, they labor in vain who built it."
Psalm 127:1.
2. "True to Faith"—Rev. Tillman Habegger, Assoc. president
"Ye are built upon the foundation—Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone." Eph. 2:20
3. "Outreach of the Gospel"—Rev. C. I. Birkey, Foreign Secretary
"Jesus Christ the Chief Corner Stone; he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." I Peter 2:6-cf. Luke 16:15, 16
Prayer

Service at new church

Men's Chorus

Pastor, deacon and trustees stand before the church.

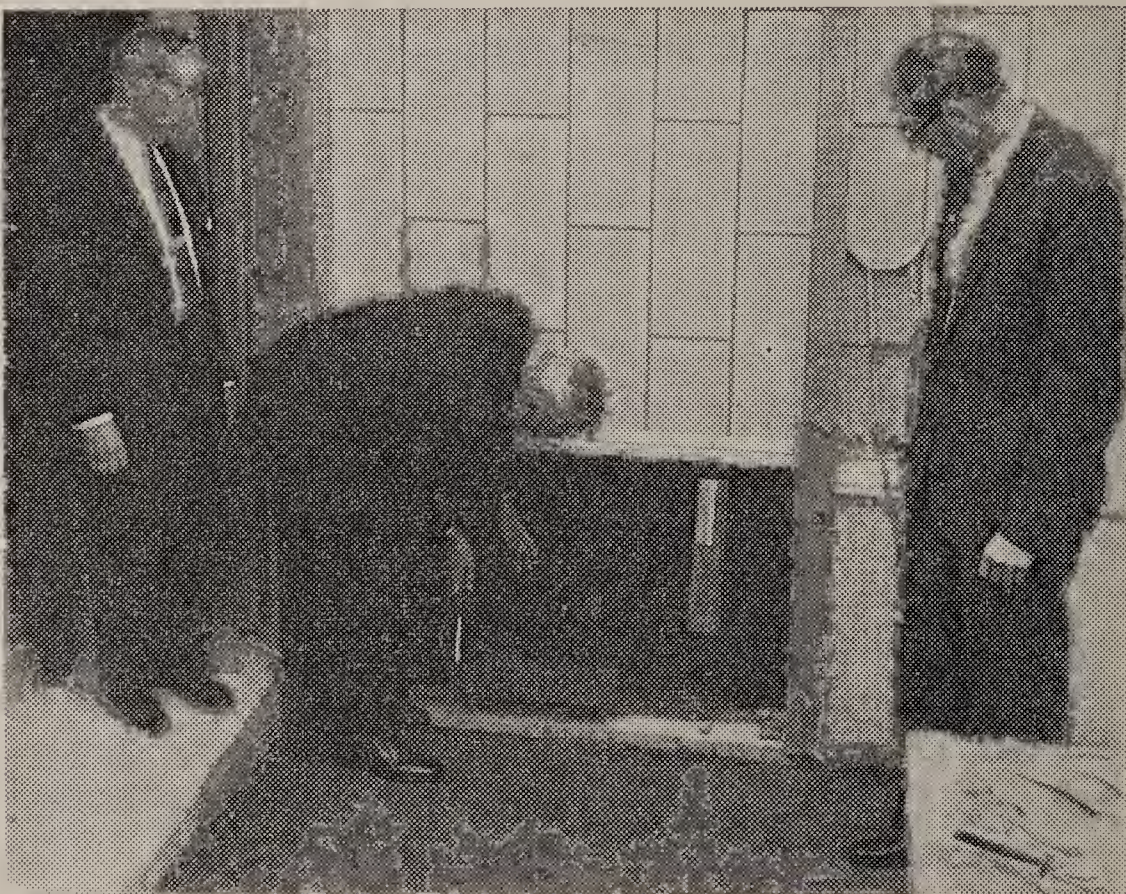
Pastor exhibits the box and gives list of contents.

4. Entreaty for Help—Menno Hirschy, deacon
Prayer for divine blessing for the entire work represented by this building.
—Deacon M. S. Hirschy aided by Oswin Amstutz and Homer Inniger place the box in location.
—Trustees Leslie Sprunger, Cyrus Lehman, LaVerne Sprunger, aid the builder, Merlin W. Habegger and Architect Esch place the stone with trowel and mortar.
Congregational song
Closing prayer—Rev. Birkey and Rev. Habegger

Corner Stone Contents in 1960

With items of the corner stone laid in 1908, these following things are placed in the box for the Corner Stone Laying of the new First Missionary Church of Berne, May 1, 1960.

1. A history of the church, brought up to date. Written by Miss Caroline I. Hirschy.
2. Pictures of the old White Church purchased in 1896, the brick church built in 1908 and the new church built in 1960.
3. Annual Church Reports for 1958 and 1959. These contain the present membership list, officers of all departments of the church and Sunday School, the new building Planning Committee, the Building Committee, a report of church finances, etc.
4. A recent copy of the Missionary Church Association constitution and a copy of our by-laws.
5. A recent copy of the Missionary Worker.
6. A Sunshine Makers acorn jug with 1960 coins in it, and a note inserted telling of our children's work.
7. The names of our new building contractors.
8. A set of the leaflets describing the progress of the building operations.
9. A church bulletin of this date.
10. A copy of the Berne Witness of April 29, 1960 with a detailed announcement of the corner stone laying.



THE DEACONS ASSIST IN LAYING THE CORNER STONE

The rectangular church facing the East stands in the middle of the five acre plot about 300 feet from the highway. Two 60' x 200' black-topped parking lots are on the east part of the plot. Between these plots is

a lawn area about 100 by 200 feet which is being seeded. Other lawn areas along the north and south sides and on the west side of the building will be seeded, a total of 104,200 square feet or 2.4 acres. A large black-topped parking area 200' by 245' is on the west side. In the front the north south sidewalk is about 18 feet from the front of the building. A wide sidewalk leads to the entrance of the building.

Coming along highway 27 one sees at closer range the open steel tower in front of the church. This tower supports a sheltering canopy and lifts a large steel cross to a height of 45 feet. The cross automatically illuminated at night reminds one of the Cross of Christ, a symbol of hope to travelers on the highway.

The main part of the church building, the sanctuary, is in the form of a rectangular solid which manifests strength and firmness. It is flanked on the south and north sides by educational units, a smaller unit is on the west side. The dimensions of the sanctuary are 46 by 97 feet; the dimensions of the entire building are 103' 5" by 141' 3". The approximate total floor area is 14,500 square feet.

Ten large steel beams form the bones of the sanctuary. They rise 22 feet above the floor and support the 4-inch solid cedar decking. Eleven foot brick-block-brick walls are on the south, west, and north sides. The upper part of the walls are made of white translucent kalwall panels. These kalwall panels are 4 feet wide, 12 feet long and 3 3/4" thick. They extend down from the ceiling to the brick walls on the south, west, and north side. On the east side of the foyer the kalwall panels extend down from the ceiling 20 feet to a railing 2 feet from the floor.

Kalwall serves as an interior wall, curtain, window, and outside wall. It lets light come through but does not admit direct rays of the sun. It is strong, highly resistant to shattering, twisting, and vibrations. It is an excellent thermal insulator. It is effected very little by wide temperature variations. Its decorative beauty adds to the attractiveness of the entire wall.

Eighteen six globe chandeliers and thirteen spot lights furnish light for the sanctuary. The light of the chandeliers can be dimmed to various degrees of light.

The floor of the sanctuary, pulpit, and pastor's study are carpeted. The balcony, S. S. units, corridors, choir loft, rest rooms and foyer have vinyl tile. The rest rooms have ceramic tile walls.

The 48 pews 17' 2 1/2" long are arranged in two sections of 24 pews each with a 5 foot aisle between the two sections. Narrower 3 foot aisles are along the south and north walls. The balcony above the 15' by 46' foyer has 14 pews 15' 2" long arranged in two sections with aisles corresponding to those of the main floor.

The elevated podium has a pulpit of conservative but stately lines, four pulpit chairs, four choir pews 22 feet long, and a baptistry at the upper right side. A 6 by 6 foot oak cross decorated to blend with the pulpit chairs is suspended from the ceiling above the choir pews. The enlarged Baldwin organ is south of the podium on the main floor. The piano is in a corresponding position on the north side.

The main entrance to the sanctuary from the foyer is by double glass doors. There are entrances to each aisle along the wall. At the front

of the seating area there are entrances from the corridors on the south and north sides. Entrances to the pulpit and choir area are from both sides.

The estimated seating capacity is 520 in the sanctuary, 140 in the balcony, 60 in the choir loft, 80 in the overflow space of the narthex or a total of 800.

The Sunday School and educational units are along the north, west and south sides of the sanctuary. An 18 by 128 foot corridor is between the sanctuary and the educational units along the north and south sides. A narrower corridor separates the sanctuary area from the units on the west side. The longer corridors are provided with coat and hat racks and storage cabinets. Twenty-four globular lights illuminate the three corridors.

The north side educational units 18 by 140 feet are provided with folding doors and folding chairs. This area provides Sunday School facilities for the Youth Department and some Adult classes. It is also used for Youth Fellowship services, Men's meetings and the four departments of the Women's Missionary Society. It can be used as a fellowship hall for weddings and funerals. At the west end of the unit is an 18 by 18 foot modern kitchen.

The 12 by 48 foot west side unit includes the 12 by 12 pastor's study and three Sunday School rooms. This space is also used for a choir preparatory room and council or conference room.

The south side educational unit 18 by 140 feet provides room for the children's Sunday School departments and classes, the Sunday evening children's meeting, and the Wednesday evening children's prayer meeting. The rooms are furnished with two pianos. Each unit has suitable chairs, tables, platform, blackboard, bulletin board, and flannelgraph.

The Sunday School units have a special kind of window, known as twindow. It is made of two panes of plate glass, each set at the proper distance from the other and held there by aluminum form; with compressed air forced between the panes, the assembly is sealed. The overall thickness is one inch. Each educational unit is lighted with 24-inch ceiling spot lights.

The three educational units provide room for sixteen Sunday School classes. Two classes meet in the balcony and two in the sanctuary.

The 7 by 12 foot office of the Sunday School superintendent is on the east side of the building at the end of the north corridor. On the south side at the end of the south corridor is the custodian's equipment and supply room. Next to this room is the men's rest room then the ladies' rest room. All these rooms are accessible from the foyer. A nursery is at east end of the south educational unit.

The building has double door entrances at the east, and at the west end of the north and south corridors.

Drinking fountains are in the east foyer and in the west part of the north corridor. Telephone service is in the foyer, with extension in the pastor's study. The call number is 2-2991.

The acoustics of the building include speakers in the sanctuary, foyer, nursery and in the north unit. Hearing aids are in several locations. There

is an ample number of microphones. The control desk is in the southeast corner of the sanctuary.

The temperature of the building is regulated by the Prop-R-Temp Typhoon Heat Pump. This plant heats in the winter, cools in the summer and air-conditions at all times. Both water and electricity are used in the operation of the pump.

The water supply comes from the 185 foot deep well which has water rising within 45 feet of the ground level. It has an estimated capacity of 85 gallons or more per minute.

In the midsummer of 1960 two new committees were named, the Landscaping committee and the Parking Lot Marking Committee. The members of the first committee are George Hewitt, chairman, Harold Langham, Assistant, Ernest Amstutz, Ted Hirschy, Don Grove, Tillman Moser, Tillman Sprunger, Robert Amstutz, Arthur Fox, Frank Steury, Lester Habegger, Percy Gould. The work of this committee includes lawn area leveling and seeding, planting shrubs and trees.

The Parking Lot Marking Committee includes Walter Schindler, chairman, James DeArmond, Amos E. Moser, Delmar Neuenschwander, Dee Jones. Since moving day this committee has become the Parking Committee.

In the summer of 1956 and 1957 a few of the farmers of the church did the practical thing of planting crops on the church ground. Arthur Fox furnished tractor, gas, and seed to plant the five acres in soy beans. Noah Amstutz harvested the crop, sold it and gave the proceeds of about \$240.00 to the building fund. The next year Arthur Fox and Franklin Steury sowed the plot in oats and grass with the plan of having a sod after harvest. This crop was harvested and the proceeds also given to the building fund.

There were calls for other manual labor. The brick for the building came in three shipments. The men of the church unloaded the bricks and brought them to the church grounds.

The Landscaping Committee had between 40 and 50 working in some evenings with shovels, rakes dozer, tractor, disk, ground packer and harrow working the lawn areas.

The women of the church did considerable cleaning. They washed the large windows of the educational units on the inside and outside.

General cleaning of floors, furniture, lights and other things were done by men.

The committees appointed to plan, to guide and counsel, to promote, to encourage, to observe and expedite the entire building program have given their time, applied their talents, exercised good will and patience until the completed building stood as a reward for their tireless efforts.

The faithful and sacrificial giving to the building fund for a period of more than fifteen years is commendable. The church treasurer and finance committee have administered the finances very carefully. The approximate cost of the structure is \$225,000.00. Outstanding accounts can be liquidated at the appointed time.

The beginning of the building of the church was a matter of faith coupled with much planning. As the plan evolved step by step until its consummation the guidance of God was very evident. Hitherto the Lord hath helped. The building is the house of God in a true sense, and shall be used for His glory.

The new church building was completed in August, 1960. On Sunday, August 21, the congregation had Sunday School in the church on Jefferson St., then went to the new church on Highway 27, at Parkway for the 10:00 A.M. morning worship.

FIRST CHURCH SERVICE — NEW CHURCH

10:00—Morning Worship. New church, Hiway 27 at Parkway

Order of Service

Prelude—Gladys Chrisman

Welcome to this house of God

With gratefulness to God and humbleness of heart, we enter our new church for our first public meeting, the Sunday morning worship service. With song, with prayer, with Scripture, with heart searching, with renewed personal dedication do we come to this important occasion. Only once in a generation or two, does a congregation build and occupy a new church home.—Pastor

Opening hymn, No. 157—"Come, Thou Almighty King"

Invocation—Pastor

Men's Chorus—"Praise, Oh Praise Jehovah"

Ceremony—Presentation of church—Leslie Sprunger, Trustee:

"It is with great happiness and with great pleasure that we are here this morning, for the work has taken quite a while.

"To you the Congregation we now turn over this New Building, hoping in everything that we do, and above everything we will keep on worshipping God.

"It is with great pleasure and thankfulness to our Lord and Saviour, in behalf of the Planning and Survey Committee, the Architect, the Builders, and the Building Committee, that I present this New Building, ready for our first Public Worship Service; our New Home, our New Place of Worship. OUR NEW CHURCH."

(Mr. Sprunger passed the church key to the pastor and the pastor passed it to Mr. Hirschy.)

Accepting the church—Menno Hirschy, Vice-Chairman, Church Board:

"For this first public worship service in our new church home, we humbly thank God.

"I speak as a representative of the entire congregation, of every department of the church and the church council,—and I receive this key as a symbol of the opening of the doors of our new church for the worship of God. May great blessing from the Lord rest upon this first worship service and all services that shall follow. The dedication of this building is to be held soon, at which time we shall seek, in a proper way, to set it apart unto God for His glory, His worship and His kingdom, both here and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Congregation sings—"To God Be The Glory"

Offering

Scripture reading, John 6:27-28—Pastor

Morning Prayer—Homer Inniger

Full Choir—"Send Forth Thy Spirit"

Sermon—"What Shall We Do Now"

Closing hymn, No. 10—"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

Benediction—Oswin Amstutz

Postlude—Gladys Chrisman

At the close of the sermon the pastor asked the Board of Deacons, the Trustees, S. S. officers, MYF officers and counsellors and leaders, Men's Fellowship officers, officers of the four women's groups to come to the altar, where they knelt, dedicating themselves to the service of God here and to the ends of the earth. The entire congregation was asked to join in prayer and dedication. It is the desire of the church that the members live and labor to bring glory to God and to win others to love, serve, and glorify Him.

OFFICERS

Chairman of Church and Council	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Rev. J. J. Klopfenstein</i>
Vice Chairman	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Menno S. Hirschy</i>
Secretary	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Vilas Schindler</i>
Treasurer	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Carl W. Amstutz</i>
Missionary Treasurer	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>John Zehr</i>
S. S. Superintendent	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Ornell Sprunger</i>
Trustee Chairman	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Leslie Sprunger</i>

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

Sunday School	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Ornell Sprunger, Supt.</i>
Missionary Youth Fellowship	-	-	-	-	-	<i>LeRoy Sprunger, President</i>
Mission Band	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Virgil Amstutz, President</i>
Men's Missionary Fellowship	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Clifton Amstutz, President</i>
Children's Work						
Happy Hour	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Mrs. Mary Klopfenstein, Leader</i>
Women's Missionary Society						
Ladies' Aid	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Mrs. Howard Pharr, President</i>
Dorcas Missionary Circle	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Mrs. Albert Egly, President</i>
Girls' Auxiliary	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Arvilla Hirschy, President</i>
Girls' Sewing Circle	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Martha Hirschy, Sponsor</i> <i>Dianna Pharr, President</i>

PASTORS OF FIRST MISSIONARY CHURCH

Rev. William Egle	-	-	-	-	-	-	1898-1903
Rev. Solomon Klopfenstein	-	-	-	-	-	-	1903-1904
Rev. Alfred M. Clauser	-	-	-	-	-	-	1904-1905
Rev. Edgar F. Clauser	-	-	-	-	-	-	1905-1906
Rev. Hiram H. Amstutz	-	-	-	-	-	-	1906-1911
Rev. George P. Schroeder	-	-	-	-	-	-	1912-1913
Rev. Samuel J. Grabill	-	-	-	-	-	-	1913-1919
Rev. William J. Amstutz	-	-	-	-	-	-	1919-1921
Rev. William Egle	-	-	-	-	-	-	1921-1930
Rev. Henry E. Tropf	-	-	-	-	-	-	1930-1935
Rev. Clarence H. Wiederkehr	-	-	-	-	-	-	1936-1948
Rev. J. Pritchard Amstutz	-	-	-	-	-	-	1948-1952
Rev. Joseph J. Klopfenstein	-	-	-	-	-	-	1952-

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

David Sprunger1896
 J. J. Amstutz1905
 John Merriman1906-1907
 David Hirschy1907-1908
 H. H. Amstutz1909-1910

D. J. Schwartz1911-1912
 Henry Schindler1912-1919
 Noah Schindler1920-1924
 Vilas Schindler1924-1952
 Ornell Sprunger1953-

CHARTER MEMBERS

At Organization of Church Body, 1908

Amos Amstutz
 Mrs. Amos Amstutz
 J. J. Amstutz
 Mrs. J. J. Amstutz
 Menno Amstutz
 J. U. Amstutz
 Mrs. J. U. Amstutz
 Jesse Amstutz
 Sylvia Amstutz
 Chris Bruchy
 Mrs. Chris Bruchy
 Zilla Gilliom
 Christian Hirschy
 Mrs. Christian Hirschy
 David Hirschy
 Mrs. David Hirschy
 Rufus Hirschy
 Mrs. Rufus Hirschy
 Menno Hirschy
 Emma Hirschy
 Eli Hirschy
 Mrs. Eli Hirschy
 Mathilda Hirschy
 Norman Hirschy
 J. J. Hirschy
 Mrs. J. J. Hirschy
 Albert Hirschy
 Caroline Hirschy
 Lillie Hirschy Fox

Mrs. Lena Hirschy
 Sarah Hirschy
 Philip Huser
 Mrs. Philip Huser
 Mrs. Anna Liechty
 Mrs. Peter Liechty
 Jacob Neuenschwander
 William Reusser
 Ada Reusser
 Emma Reusser
 Harry Runyon
 Mrs. Harry Runyon
 Flora Sauder
 Amos Schindler
 Mrs. Amos Schindler
 Sam Schindler
 Mrs. Sam Schindler
 Erna Schindler
 Agnes Sprunger
 Esther Sprunger
 Martha Sprunger
 John Stauffer
 George Stauffer
 Jacob Stucky
 Joseph Stucky
 Mrs. Joseph Stucky
 Henry Winteregg
 Mrs. Henry Winteregg
 Mrs. William Wittwer

Sources of Information

History Missionary Church Assoc., Annual Reports of the Church, Church Records, Church Bulletins and Data, Former Pastors' files, Berne Witness files, Pastor's files, and Personal files.

CHRISTIAN HONOR ROLL

(Those who were members)

FOREIGN MISSIONARIES

Elda Amstutz	Mrs. Janean Moser
Tillman Amstutz	Pauline Muselman
Helen Burley	Fanny Schindler
Luella Burley	Waldo Schindler
Mary DeGarmo	Mrs. Cecil Schindler
Truman Gottschalk	Agnes Sprunger
Martel Fennig	Ernest Steury
Merlin Inniger	Gareth Wiederkehr
Mrs. Kathleen Jacobsen	John Zuercher
Mrs. Gladys Leonard	Mrs. Bernadine Zuercher

CHRISTIAN WORKERS IN HOME LAND

Edward Amstutz	Norman Hirschy
Jesse Amstutz	Esther Sprunger Hirschy
Leona Amstutz	Celina Amstutz Klopfen-
Paul Amstutz	stein
Roger Amstutz	Salome Schug Kuhnle
Sylvia Amstutz	Mary Alice Steury Lehman
Walter Bailey	Lila Sprunger Miller
Mrs. Esther Stucky Bailey	Edison Reynolds
Mildred Hirschy Bisset	Carolyn Muselman Russett
Shirley Ann Steury Burke	Robert Schindler
Sophia Yoss Faulkner	Robert Schrock
Brice Fennig	Lorene Habegger Schrock
Leon Fennig	Meta Hirschy Sharp
Tillman Habegger	Helen Wittwer Welch
Martha Amstutz Heller	Thomas Zehr

DEDICATION SERVICE

OCTOBER 2, 1960, 2:00 P.M.

Organ Prelude	GLADYS CHRISMAN
Hymn	CLYDE H. SPRUNGER, Director
"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"	
Scripture	REV. G. ROBERT MAGARY
	Pastor, West Missionary Church
Prayer	REV. SAMUEL J. GRABILL
	Pastor here 1913-1919
Men's Chorus	C. Kreutzer
"Praise To The Lord Today"	
Greetings	REV. GORDON NEUENSCHWANDER
	President, Berne Community Ministerial Association
Greetings	REV. CORNELIUS VLOT
	Vice-President, Missionary Church Association
Announcements	
Offering	
Church Choir	Will James
"Sing And Rejoice"	
Dedicatory Sermon, "The Stewardship of Grace".....	REV. TILLMAN HABEGGER
	President, Missionary Church Association
Act of Dedication	
Prayer of Dedication.....	REV. CLAYTON D. STEINER
	Superintendent, Central District of M.C.A.
Hymn.....	
"To God Be The Glory"	
Benediction	MENNO S. HIRSCHY
	Assistant Chairman of the congregation

Former pastors were speakers in the Sunday morning and evening services on the day of dedication: Rev. C. H. Wiederkehr of Peoria Heights, Ill., spoke at 10:00 A.M. He ministered in this church 1935-1948. Rev. H. E. Tropf of Toledo, Ohio, brought the message at 7:30 P. M. He was pastor here 1930-1935.



Rev. C. H. Wiederkehr



Rev. H. E. Tropf

CEREMONY FOR ACT OF DEDICATION

Pastor: To the glory of God, our Father, by whose enabling this house was built
To the praise of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior
To the honor of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter, Guide and Might

Congregation: We dedicate this house

Pastor: For the worship of prayer and song
For the ministry of the living Word
For the observing of the holy ordinances

Congregation: We dedicate this house

Pastor: For the comfort of those who mourn
For the strength of those who are tempted
For the enlightening of those who seek the way

Congregation: We dedicate this house

Pastor: For the promotion of fellowship among God's people
For the deepening of spiritual life in the believers
For the propagation of the Gospel at home and abroad

Congregation: We dedicate this house

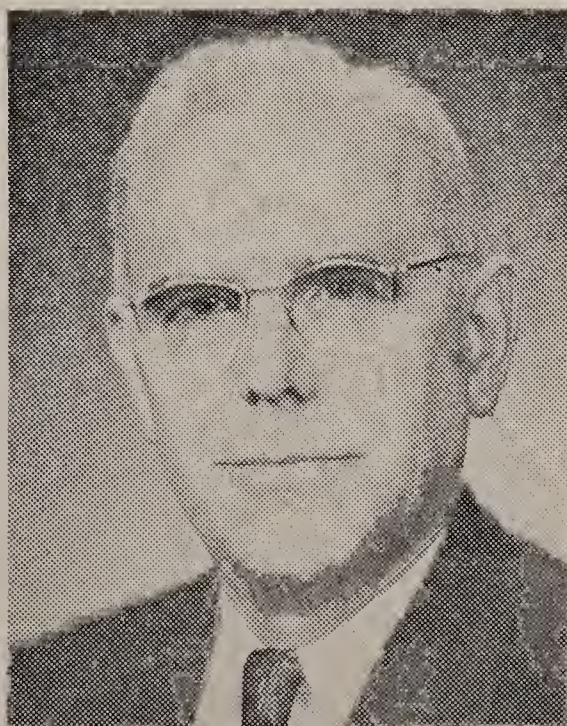
Pastor: Unto the triune God; with our faith and confidence firm in Him, we
designate this house as the First Missionary Church of Berne, a member
church of the Missionary Church Association, and to the triune God we
do now consecrate and dedicate it

Congregation: This we humbly do in the name of the Father, Son and Holy
Ghost, Amen!

Rev. Tillman Habegger, one of the many preaching-sons of this congregation, now president of the M.C.A., preached the dedication sermon. Rev. J. J. Klopfenstein, present pastor, began serving the church in 1952.



Rev. Tillman Habegger



Rev. J. J. Klopfenstein

NOTES

